

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-20

DRC-01 /165 W

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P R 011645Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9393

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 0582

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, SL

SUBJECT: UNREST IN ARMY

1. DURING OPENING CEREMONIES OF APC CONVENTION IN KENEMA MARCH 29 AMBASSADOR WAS INFORMED BY SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO PRESIDENT THAT STEVENS' PARTICIPATION IN CONVENTION MIGHT BE CURTAILED BECAUSE OF "TROUBLES WITH ARMY". LATER AT LUNCH STEVENS TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAS BEEN CONCERNED FOR SOMETIME BY THE LACK OF DISCIPLINE OF THE TROOPS STATIONED AT JUBA BARRACKS. THE SITUATION GOT SOMEWHAT OUT OF HAND ON MARCH 27 AND RESULTED IN THE ARREST OF EIGHT NON-COMS AND JUNIOR OFFICERS. THE PRESIDENT CONCLUDED THAT "THE BOYS WERE PAYING TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA" BUT EVERYTHING NOW WAS WELL UNDER CONTROL.

2. WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED AT JUBA BARRACKS IS SOMEWHAT CONFIDENTIAL

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OF A MYSTERY. NORMALLY WELL INFORMED SOURCES AS LATE

AS TODAY DID NOT EVEN KNOW THERE HAD BEEN ANY TROUBLE.
THERE HAS NOT BEEN A WORD MENTIONED OF IT BY THE LOCAL
MEDIA. APPARENTLY WHATEVER HAPPENED TOOK PLACE
ON MARCH 27 AND QUICKLY WAS SQUASHED. FORCE COMMANDER
MOMOH ADDRESSED THE TROOPS MARCH 28 AND ANNOUNCED THAT
A MILITARY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY WAS BEING FORMED AND
THAT AN EXAMPLE WOULD BE MADE OF WRONG-DOERS.

3. WHATEVER TRANSPIRED COULD NOT HAVE BEEN TOO SERIOUS
AS THERE WAS NO ALERT, NOR PRECAUTIONS (E.G., STATION-
ING OF INCREASED GUARD AT STATE
HOUSE) TAKEN EVENING
MARCH 27-28.

4. COMMENT: THE ARMY, LIKE MOST OTHER ELEMENTS OF
SIERRA LEONEAN SOCIETY, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH FIXED
INCOMES, HAVE BECOME MORE VOCAL LATELY IN THEIR COMPLAINTS
ABOUT HIGH COST OF LIVING. THIS FACT AND PRESIDENT'S
REFERENCE TO ETHIOPIAN EVENTS LEADS EMBASSY TO SPECULATE
THAT BASIS OF "ARMY TROUBLE" WAS MORE ECONOMIC THAN
POLITICAL.
OLSON

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